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Paul, an Example and Proof of the peculiar excellence and usefulness of the Missionary Character.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN HARTFORD, CONN. SEPT. 15, 1824.

AT THE

Fifteenth Annual Meeting

OF THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

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BY SAMUEL AUSTIN, D. D.

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Discourse.

GAL. i, 15, 16.

BUT WHEN IT PLEASED GOD, WHO SEPARATED ME FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB, AND CALLED ME BY HIS GRACE, TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME, THAT I MIGHT PREACH HIM AMONG THE HEATHEN, IMMEDIATELY I CONFERRED NOT WITH FLESH AND BLOOD.

THE first propagation of the Gospel, with all the saving influences that attended it, was upon a missionary system. The labors of Christ himself were, in fact, of a missionary character. He appeared among men, not to do his own will, but that of the Father who sent him. During his ministry, and considerably anterior to his crucifixion, he ordained twelve, who were called apostles, whose names are particularly mentioned in the Gospels, to be the chief instrumental agents in spreading the triumphs of his power and grace through the world.

Afterwards he appointed seventy, whom he sent abroad through the cities and villages of Judea to

preach the Gospel of the kingdom, and to perform miraculous works in his name. After his resurrection, and before he left the world, having more largely instructed the apostles, in regard to the glory of his person, the spiritual nature of his kingdom, the end of his sufferings, his competency and determination to support them in the trying service to which he was separating them, the opposition from the world they must calculate to meet, and the certain success which should attend this unprecedented and most interesting enterprise, he formally commissioned them in this memorable injunction, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.*" And we are told, that, having received this charge, seen him ascend into heaven, and been made partakers in the promised gifts of the Holy Ghost, they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by signs following.

Paul was subsequently converted, in an extraordinary manner, and united to this college of missionaries. He was to act in concert with them. His designation, however, was somewhat peculiar. He was eminently a missionary to the heathen. While their labors were chiefly devoted to those who belonged to the circumcision, his were especially given to the uncircumcision. To him the mystery, which had been hid for ages, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body with the believing Jews, was particularly revealed. To

him, he tells us, "was this grace given, that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." And to the believers at home he observes, "I am debtor, both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise; so, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you, who are at Rome also."

The world was his field of labor, and the world he traversed. We find him in Arabia, Judea, Syria, the Lesser Asia, Macedonia, Greece, Illyricum, Italy, and directing his course to the most western parts of Europe. We have a more particular account of this apostle than of any other. His labors and his success seem to have been greater than those of the other apostles; though they were undoubtedly faithful to their charge. The history of the Acts of the Apostles is rather a history of his acts. We have a larger collection of his epistolary writings, than of all the other apostles. In short, he stands before us the most eminent, laborious, and efficient of all the missionaries of the cross, and the very best mere human model of the missionary character. In this light, my brethren, judging it to be sufficiently appropriate to the present exercise, I propose, with divine assistance, to set before you the most prominent features in the character of Paul.

I must apprise you, however, that I intend to select those things only in this eminent missionary, which, in their nature, are to be looked for in all

Christian missionaries, and which, for aught that appears, might, to an equal degree, be possessed by them.

I shall therefore leave out of the account, if he possessed them, as some imagine that he did, such remarkable talents as he seemed to display, his inspiration, the miraculous gifts and powers with which he was favored, and the very unusual consolations which were, at times, imparted to him.

I shall be excused, if any can think it objectionable, for making pretty copious quotations from the Scriptures of the New Testament. For this sure Record is at once the light by which we are to be guided, and the authority on which our conclusions must rest.

1. Let us begin with the commencement of his missionary career, and mark the submission, the self-denial, the decision, and the promptitude, with which he devotes himself to this holy service.

This is set distinctly before us in the text, and is more fully illustrated in other parts of the New Testament scriptures. "But, when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, *immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*" To estimate his character, in this incipient stage of its formation, with any tolerable justness, we ought to consider what great temporal sacrifices he was now called to make. All that he had been, as a

man of uncommon popularity, among the most respectable of the Jews; all the alliances, he had formed and enjoyed; all the ties of consanguinity and friendship, that twined about his heart, which probably were as strong in him as in other men; all the prospects of honor and emolument, which were before him; and, what is much more, all the expectations of immortal rewards, which he had thought himself fully warranted to entertain, as a strict and conscientious Pharisee, must be forever relinquished.

How far the then future scenes of his labor and sufferings were disclosed to him, we cannot say. But he certainly well understood the offence of the cross; for he had been the perpetrator of the most horrid cruelties in his wrath against it. The Lord said of him to Ananias, "For he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." He knew the embittered hostility of his Jewish brethren against Christ, whom they had crucified as a vile impostor. He knew that the Gentiles could hardly endure the sight of a Jew; and that the devotees of a sensual and inveterate idolatry, the priest and the magistrate, the high and the low, would be exasperated at the attempt to spread a doctrine so spiritual, so peculiar, so unsocial and exclusive, as that of Christ and him crucified.

Now, mark his conduct. He tears from his heart, in a moment, all these ties of nature and acquaint-

ance. He sacrifices upon the altar of his faith all these temporal interests. He denies himself in all that he had been, and had been seeking. He gives up family, country, and the immortal hopes he had so fondly cherished. In one word, he forsakes all. He takes up the cross with the most serious determination to bear it, heavy as it might be, through the residue of his days on earth. He counts the cost, and readily pays it down. Thou didst call, said he, Lord, and here I am. Tell me what thou wouldst have me to do, and I do it. Tell me where thou wouldst have me to go, and I go. Tell me what thou wouldst have me suffer, and I suffer it; be it hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, stripes, imprisonment, or death, in the most frightful forms. Welcome all, if I may but have grace to be faithful. Not a Pharisee, or Rabbi, or relative, shall be his adviser. "I conferred not with flesh and blood." Henceforth he knows no man after the flesh. The evidence and the obligation were distinctly before him. And the obligation must be discharged. Said Luther, when his friends would dissuade him from appearing before the German Diet, on account of the great personal hazards which would attend it, "I would go to Spires, if there were as many devils in the city, as there are tiles upon the houses." Paul enters upon his mission with an undelaying promptitude. "*Immediately*, I conferred not." He does not hesitate, as if he were but half resolved. He does not spend months in a super-

fluous preparation, as though he was going to be a mere traveller; as though there were no souls perishing, and it were a matter of little importance, after all, whether the Gospel be preached. He does not wait for associates, or a pleasanter sky. The service appointed him he embraced as a privilege, as a signal honor, of which he was infinitely unworthy, not as a hard and tedious business, which, though unwelcome, *must* be performed. The object before him was exactly suited to the strong benevolence of his heart. It was the greatest and noblest that ever wrought upon the energies of the human mind. It was such to him; and he was eager to be in his work.

Thus, at the outset, through the cross of Christ, the world was crucified to him, and he to the world. The anchor of his hope was cast within the vail, and it drew him strongly to itself. But he did not wish to arrive there, before he had faithfully performed the service assigned him.

2. Let us mark the steadfastness of his purpose, and his inflexible perseverance in his missionary labors, to the very end of his life; which was so prolonged that he styled himself, "Paul the aged."

"We are not," says he, "of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." To the elders of the Ephesian Church he says, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things

that shall befal me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." To the Philippians he says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do; forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Just at the close of life, and in the most serious review of the past, he says "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." We discern his resolution to be shaken in no instance. We perceive no symptom of yielding the struggle to the demands of the adversary; no retreat from the post which circumstances required him to occupy; no regrets in the consideration of the choice he had made; no departure from the proper course of his missionary duty. Dangers did not appal him. Contradictions did not abash him. The menaces of authority did not stop his mouth, nor diminish his efforts. He says, "Necessity is laid upon me. Yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."

3. We notice the ardor of his pious affections, and the tenderness of those affections.

Paul was, in a high degree, and with a remarkable uniformity, an affectionate man; affectionate I mean, in regard to spiritual objects, and the moral condition of men. His benevolence was expansive as the world, embracing Jews and Gentiles, of every rank, and was too generous and devoted to be checked by provocation, or straitened by partial considerations. It fastened upon its object with a vehement desire. This we learn partly from what he did, and very fully from the strong language he uses. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." His language has in it indeed the clearest evidence of being from the abundance of the heart. It shews that he loses himself, in the strong current of his affection towards others. Towards Christ, his ever-beloved master, how strong they were! I will quote to you but a single passage, in reference to him. "But what was gain to me I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ—that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Towards

his brethren in Christ, to the conversion of many of whom he had been directly instrumental, he seems to be all love. "So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us—But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire—For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy—Ye are in our hearts to die and live with you."

Does he affirm correctly of himself, when he appeals to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus as witnesses of the deep interest he took in the everlasting welfare of those, to whom his labors extended in that city? We cannot doubt it. His words are, "Therefore watch, and remember, that, by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

To the Corinthians, some of whom, from the invidious insinuations of false apostles, had treated him very wrongfully, he most pathetically says, "I seek not yours, but you; and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

Very strongly did his benevolence go forth towards the unbelieving Jews, who were his brethren according to the flesh, the most of whom, at

least, were his embittered persecutors. "I say the truth in Christ: I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." However criticism may dispose of this passage, it certainly expressed very strong benevolence towards this description of people; a benevolence that could rest in nothing short of their eternal salvation, which perhaps is all that it is important that we should get from it. In perfect coincidence with this passage, is the first verse of the following chapter. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved." Thus the ardor of holy affection, in all the modifications and towards all the objects of it, wrought perpetually in the soul of this distinguished missionary.

4. We will now turn our attention to another trait in Paul's character as a Christian Missionary, closely connected with what has been just mentioned, his exclusive devotedness to the object of his mission, and his indefatigable industry in prosecuting it.

Was not his eye single? Was he not, through the whole course of his life, subsequent to his conversion, engrossed, we might almost say perfectly, by the work to which he had been called? Did he not, in agreement with the injunction he laid on

Timothy, give himself wholly to these things? What worldly good does he appear at any time to have sought? Did he mingle at all in projects of worldly ambition or schemes of avarice? Was he, for a day or an hour, in search of popularity, of splendor, or of ease? We discern nothing in him of this nature. And his declarations respecting himself, especially considering with what solemnity they were uttered, are certainly entitled to confidence. He says, "For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, neither a cloke of covetousness. God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, or yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. Did I make a gain of you, by any of them that I sent unto you? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? Walked we not by the same spirit? Walked we not by the same rule?" The love of popularity, of preferment, in the higher, but spurious grades of the sacerdotal office, of indolence, of luxurious indulgence, and superfluous riches, the opposite entirely of the self-denial of the Gospel, has been, and continues to be, to a great extent, the disgrace and ruin of the Christian ministry. Nothing of this is to be seen in our apostolic missionary. Never indeed does he designedly take an offensive attitude. Never does he aim to draw persecution on himself for the sake of the honors and the rewards of martyrdom. But his charge he executes with a cautious self-denial, and a most exemplary purity.

His industry appears to have corresponded with the singleness of his purpose. We will not forget what he says to the Ephesian elders, "Ye yourselves know, that these hands, have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me." To the believers in Corinth he says, "Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more, in labors more abundant—in weariness and painfulness; besides those things, that come upon me daily, the care of all the Churches." To the Thessalonians he says, "For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travel; for, laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God." From the account given of him in the Acts, and from his own writings, he appears to have been unceasingly engaged, wearing himself down in the labors of his mission, scarce giving himself an hour of innocent, and, as we should say, necessary, relaxation.

5. Another circumstance deserving notice, in Paul's discharge of the duties of his mission, is the manner in which he preached the Gospel.

I do not refer to his attitude as a preacher, his gestures, his enunciation, the smoothness of his periods, or the energy and pathos with which he may be supposed to have poured out his inspirations. These, it is confessed, are of some necessity, at least to conciliate the estimate of fastidious hearers. But the Holy Spirit has not thought them of sufficient importance to make them a part of an infallible

revelation. Whether Paul excelled in these attributes of an orator we know not. But we know that, in some very essential points, he did admirably well in his manner of preaching. We know that he was not, "as many who corrupted the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, spake he in Christ." We know that he kept back nothing that he deemed profitable to his hearers, but that he testified, with an elevated zeal, not only in the place of public concourse, but, from house to house, "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." He is called to address all descriptions of people, and to combat ignorance, prejudice and authority. He stands before philosophers and kings; and he never forgets where he is or to whom he is speaking. He adapts his instructions to the capacities and condition of all. He is condescending to those in the lower, and respectful to those who are in the higher, ranks of life. He is at once modest and intrepid. He is the gentleman, at the same time that he is the Christian missionary. So self-possessed was he, so dignified in his address, so powerful in his reasonings, and so pathetic in his representations before Felix and his court, that Felix trembled, and could stifle his alarms only by the dismissal of his prisoner. On a subsequent occasion, in a public apology before Festus and Agrippa, Paul, growing warm upon his subject, and appealing to the knowledge which Aggripa had of the prophets, drew

from him the confession, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." With a promptitude, and pertinency, and benignity of feeling, which could hardly fail to subdue, he replied, "Would to God, that not only thou, but that all who hear me this day, were, not only almost, but altogether, such as I am except these bonds." Before the court of Areopagus, in Athens, a stranger, a Jew, in their hands, and at their disposal, to destroy him if they should so decide, in presence of the magistrates and philosophers, he undauntedly and powerfully reproves their idolatry; sets before them the character of Jehovah as the true God, the author of nature, and the sole object of religious worship; quotes from their own authorities in support of his doctrines; and enforces the truths he had urged by the declaration, that though in time past, this ignorance had not been publicly reproved by an inspired messenger, "God now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

He is scrupulously regardful of what is due to men in all the distinctions, which obtain in civil society; of which his letter to Philemon, respecting his servant Onessimus, is a beautiful example.

In things, which do not come under the cognizance either of doctrine or of law, he "became all

things to all men, that he might by all means save some." Let us remark,

6. The patience, the equanimity and the buoyancy of spirit, with which he endured that series of afflictions which attended him.

There is something truly admirable in the manner in which he speaks of his sufferings. He is not ashamed to detail them in all their forms, and in their whole extent. Never mere man endured so much, that is ignominious and abusive. Not only were his deprivations severe, as the mere consequence of his fidelity; but the positive sufferings brought on him by his cruel persecutors were intolerable. "In stripes," says he, "above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned. We are made the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things." To Timothy he says, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith—persecutions, afflictions which came upon me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured. But out of them all, the Lord delivered me." These afflictions, brought on him entirely for the sake of the Gospel, were sustained with patience, with undiminished zeal, with a most admirable cheerfulness and elevation of spirit. "For which cause we faint not; but, though our outward man perish, the inward man is renewed in strength day by day.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal." He even says, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." And again, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." How mightily, did the graces work in the heart of Paul to raise him thus above that series of most severe persecutions, which perpetually assailed him? Patience in him seemed to have its perfect work. Faith in him was indeed the victory which overcometh the world.

7. We ought not to omit the notice of his entire contentment with those scanty supplies for the necessities of nature, which, in addition to the product of his own labors, he received from the contributions of his brethren.

We have a remarkable testimony to this part of his character in his Epistle to the Philippians. "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be

hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have done well that ye did communicate with my affliction. For, even in Thessalonica, ye did send once and again unto my necessities. Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all and abound; I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well pleasing to God." Thus his labors, though severe, and inducing every species of distress, were properly gratuitous. Thus he was satisfied to be deeply abased in regard to the things of this world, even to extreme destitution. He considered himself as full, and abounding, when common necessaries were supplied from the hand of fraternal charity. How consentaneous this with all the other excellent traits in his missionary character! And how amiably unlike, at the same time, to those who take the lead in the affairs of this world! Theirs must be wealth, splendor and dissipation. Even ecclesiastics, in millions of examples, who professed to be subject to the holy religion which shone, with so much moral beauty, in Paul, and even to be public teachers of it, have, in the true spirit of priestcraft, and, by innumerable forms of imposition, amassed enormous wealth, and employed it to purposes of worldly parade and luxury.

"The grace of God which bringeth salvation teacheth us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Just so,

8. Did our apostolic missionary live.

"Herein," says he, "do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." He appeals to the converts at Thessalonica, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." Thus, with well doing he put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God; took away occasion from those who sought occasion; disarmed his adversaries, and adorned the Gospel.

9. The farther remark may be made with respect to Paul, that he was a man of much prayer.

This part of his character was necessarily less public, than some other parts. But it comes out to view with sufficient clearness to warrant the assertion that he was *greatly* distinguished in this respect. He says, "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that, without ceasing, I make mention of you always in

my prayers." "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God night and day, praying exceedingly that we might see your face and perfect that which is lacking in your faith." Again, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man." He enjoins it upon his Ephesian converts, "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." Doubtless that which he enjoined upon others, was carried to an equal extent, into his own practice. Whatever the ungodly and the skeptical may suggest against the obligation and the utility of prayer; it is perfectly certain, that piety will always be inclined thus to maintain a filial intercourse with God; and the more elevated a man's piety is, the more will he employ himself in this exercise.

10. One thing more only I deem it requisite to mention respecting the missionary character of Paul; and that is, his deep humility, in the midst of the evidence that was clearly and continually before him of his interest in the covenant favor of God, of the high standing he held in the estimate of all the followers of Jesus, and of his amazing success in gaining converts to his Lord.

Paul had evidence of his unalterable interest in the salvation of the Gospel, which was as clear to

him, as it is unquestionable to us. He always speaks in language of confidence, with respect to his own saving interest in Christ.

His success in preaching the Gospel was great. It is supposed, that there were half a million of Christians before the termination of the first century. There is reason to presume, that Paul was the happy instrument of the conversion of a large portion of them.

His influence in the Church was pre-eminently great. Yet he is never elated. He arrogates nothing to himself. While he does not deny, and certainly it did not become him to deny, his apostolic endowments and authority, he places himself on a level with all his brethren. He is, like his divine Master, the servant of all. He counts himself, he expressly speaks of himself, as less than the least of all saints. He declares that he is not sufficient of himself to think any thing as of himself. He refuses to glory. He even says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ." His feelings and his religious habits are in agreement with his instructions to Timothy. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

Upon the whole, my brethren, we have an admirable assemblage of evangelic virtues in the missionary character of Paul. We do not say, that it is absolutely perfect. But it is really difficult to

detect in it any intellectual, moral, or official deficiency. Thus he made full proof of his ministry, and magnified his office. Thus, laboring to be accepted, he became well prepared to give up his account with joy.

No mere man is so much an object of admiration as Paul. No man ever performed such deeds of heroic and persevering goodness. No man ever achieved so much that is truly great. He was indeed a burning and a shining light. The benefits resulting to the world from his missionary labors are beyond all estimate. They have passed down the current of ages. They have spread extensively over the world. They are felt deeply by ourselves. They carry a sanctifying power to the bosom of every Christian. They will pass down the ages that are to follow, and spread farther and farther and farther, till they pervade the entire population of the globe. They will contribute mightily to the full glory of the millennium, and to swell the hosannas of the highest heaven.

1. From this delineation of the missionary character of Paul, which after all is very inadequate, is it not an obvious inference, that the Christian religion carries with it decisive evidence of its divine original, from the influence it has upon those who are unquestionably and most conspicuously its subjects.

All other religions not only fail entirely to improve, but powerfully contribute to sink into deeper and

deeper debasement, the human character. They impart no light to the understanding; but hold it in the darkness of the most deceptive, and gloomy, and guilty superstitions. They do not form the heart to one sentiment of genuine virtue; but strengthen its depravity by a powerful indurating influence. They do not lead their votaries one step in the way of a holy practice, but stimulate them to pursue all iniquity with greediness. An imperfect morality may, in a few instances, be discerned among some of the philosophers of Grecian and Roman antiquity. But not a single example is presented of disinterested, patient, and persevering effort to lead men from sin and wretchedness to holiness and heaven. Indeed they had not one single desirable object before them; nor one impulse of a properly useful tendency. The way of peace they did not know. Their wisdom was foolishness. Their magnanimity was the pride of a false philosophy. Their virtue was a spurious patriotism, which sought, regardless of the dictates of humanity, the aggrandizement of one, at the expense of the blood and treasure of other nations.

The Christian religion is peculiar and most propitious in its influences. It raises man from a spiritual death to a spiritual life; from the vainest superstitions to the ennobling knowledge, love, and worship, of the living God; from a detestable selfishness to the most liberal views, and the most useful pursuits. It changes the carnal, into the

spiritual, man. It imbues its subject with kind affections, and spreads those affections abroad upon the most elevated objects. For the sake of the everlasting happiness of a fellow-man, of a miserable creature, whom the pride of the world would pass by with neglect, perhaps with contempt, of an enemy whom hate would destroy, it watches, and labors, and suffers, and prays, is intrepid in the greatest dangers, and is willing to die any moment. In short, it formed such a character as that of Paul. Is then this religion a contrivance of man? Is it not certainly from God?

2. Does not the survey, which has been taken of the character of Paul, go to a complete vindication of the doctrines of grace against the objection, that they subvert obligation and have a tendency to produce a lax and careless manner of living?

It cannot be denied without putting an affront upon reason and trampling evidence in the dust, that Paul, more than any other sacred writer, insists upon these doctrines as the truth of God, the essential articles of the Gospel of our salvation. No man ever believed them more firmly. No man could have been, no man is, and probably no man will be, at least till the millennium, more under the practical influence of them than Paul. What was their influence in fact upon him? Did they make him an idler in his vocation? Did they paralyze his moral sensibilities and make him careless of his duty? He is before us in his true character. And

a better mere human character never was formed. Let even a captious liberality judge. His life is decisive proof that these doctrines are according to godliness, and do, and must ever, act most propitiously upon the hearts and lives of all who sincerely embrace them. "Do we then make void the law through faith? Yea, we establish the law."

3. Does not the view which we have taken of the missionary character of Paul completely vindicate, and strongly recommend, the office and the labors of the Christian missionary, generally considered?

Can an intelligent Christian, can a friend to the intellectual, moral, social, and immortal interests of man; can any one, who is not as great a fanatic in the cause of a skeptical liberality, as Simeon, the Stylite, was in his notions of expiatory and meritorious penance, think lightly, or speak in disparagement, of the service of the faithful missionary? Can a man, with the thousandth part of a grain of generous feeling towards his fellow-men in the wretchedness of heathenism, fail to attach his decided approbation to this office? Surely, in the example of Paul, it has the strongest recommendations.

4. Let the excellent character of Paul, as an apostolic and Christian missionary, the immeasurable value of the service he performed as such, and the incalculable benefits that result from it to a ruined world, have its proper influence upon us,

my brethren, to stimulate us to augmented efforts in the cause of missions.

Let us, in this great and godlike enterprize, come forward with a stronger zeal to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Let us labor to embody in our future selves all the moral excellencies of our apostolic missionary. The cause, for the sake of which he resigned so readily all his temporal expectations, to which he was so exclusively devoted, upon which his affections acted in so strong and tender a manner, and in which he so inflexibly persevered, is the same precisely in ours, that it was in his, hands. It is, as it was then, and ever will be, the cause of humanity, of truth, of virtue, of salvation, of God. It embraces all that is valuable to man for time and for eternity. Whoever embarks in this cause, then, must do it with all his heart. He must let his lukewarmness open itself on some temporal concern. Let him be a coward every where else; but let him fight manfully here. Let him be parsimonious in regard to all other demands; but let him be very bountiful here.

We rejoice greatly in the resuscitation, within thirty years past, of the primitive missionary spirit. But, taking the missionary character of Paul for our standard of estimation, we must confess that, after all, this is a day of small things. The Christian Church moves but slowly. The most zealous are as if they were halting between two opinions. Our contributions are as if Mammon had stronger

hold of our affections than the Lord of glory; as if things temporal were more in our eye than things eternal.

We do not complain of our missionaries. They are the most beloved of our brethren; and we confess that Christianity has strong recommendations from the virtues they display, and the part they act. But we wish them all to grow to the stature of Paul. We wish them to imbibe more largely his excellent spirit. We wish them to be as forward in the race, and as valiant in the fight, as he.

We wish our young brethren, who are candidates for this holy employment, to fix their mark by the standard of Paul; to take up their cross with an equal self-denial; and to be determined in the name of their Almighty leader, to run this race with an equal speed.

Let instructors of youth in our Theological seminaries keep this model of missionary excellence before their eyes, and direct their efforts faithfully to bless the world with missionaries of this order. Let them assiduously labor to store the minds of their pupils with correct views of Christianity, as a revealed system of truth: but be at least equally concerned to inspire them with lofty views, with zeal, with an untiring patience, and, with a holy heroism.

"The harvest is plenteous; but the laborers are few." Let us ever pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth such laborers into his

harvest. O, that one might become a thousand, land and ocean be traversed, the darkest places of the earth be explored, and the Gospel be preached as faithfully, as Paul preached it, to every creature. Then we might expect to hear the triumphant, universal shout, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign FOREVER AND EVER."